

Wellman Hall to Host Multi-Media Exhibition

By LEE SHERIDAN

"The Birchbark Canoe," a multi-media exhibition, will open Wednesday in Wellman Hall at the Springfield Library. Its three collaborating artist-craftsmen are canoe builder Henri Vaillencourt of Greenville, N.H., video artist Kenneth Dominick of Binghamton, N.Y., and Monson photographer Richard Nash.

On exhibit will be an authentic 16-foot Malecite Indian canoe constructed of northern white paper birch accompanied by a documentary of about 35 photographs and three hours of video tape, scheduled for several continuous showings throughout the day. The photographs and video will picture and dialogue the entire canoe-building process, from the selection of a birch tree to the finishing touch of making its decorative design emblem out of porcupine quills.

Nash said in an interview that he and Dominick spent about 10 days photographing, filming, and recording the New Hampshire craftsman at work and that authentic as the canoe itself are its construction methods by the 22-year-old Vaillencourt, who has been building canoes for about seven years. He said that the exhibit will also include tools used and materials, such as cedar and split ash for gunwale and spruce root for sewing the seams.

Although this will be Springfield's first video-incorporating exhibition, Dominick said that he has been working for two years in video, which is coming to



"CANOE CONSTRUCTION" by Richard Nash

the forefront as a medium people associate with flashing lights and colors. "In this case, the purpose is not so totally sensory but is concerned with informing people," he said, "using video in a quieter way,

giving a feeling of the process of the canoe-building."

He explained that, unlike the qualities of video in another context when he has used it "to develop a tension between two kinds of space, TV and actual, "video's suitability in this case is that it is "highly portable," and that "you can play back the taping not only to yourself but to the one who is being taped and discuss how well it is representing what the craftsman is doing."

The process of the canoe building he described as "very sophisticated," involving "thought and judgments on the part of the builder, many of them almost intuitive." He explained that the design of the canoe is "not strictly predetermined," that there is no model, but that Vaillencourt "deals with proportions like a sculptor or a portrait painter" and creates the canoe "in terms of its materials and proportions and the relationships between them."

Coordinator of the Experimental TV Center in Binghamton, Dominick has exhibited documentaries and video constructions at

Allegheny College in Meadville, Pa., as well as at Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, N.Y. The Springfield exhibit is his second collaboration with Nash, who recently opened his studio in Monson following three years of studying and working as a photographer in New York City.

The previous video artist-photographer documentary

was a presentation of the work of sculptor Donald Judd, which was shown at the State University of New York at Binghamton. Dominick said that the presentation combined tapes of Judd in his New York City studio, discussions of his work, and photographs of the installation of Judd's contoured steel sculpture at the Exhibition 1971.

The multi-media library

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exhibit will continue to Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
January 6, Monday to Friday. The photography exhibit will
from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., continue to January 31.